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INFORMATION REPORT

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Condition of the Kolkhoz System in Lithuania up to August 1952

1. At first the Communists did not succeed in establishing the kolkhoz system in agriculture. This does not mean, however, that under Soviet conditions the system does not have its advantages; and it is certain that, if the best aspects of the system were employed, despite the hardships involved, the kolkhoz system could achieve better results than are achieved at present. The system does not, however, bear comparison with private economy.

The Organization of Collectivization

2. It is general knowledge that the kolkhozy were organized by force. The deportations of 1948 were a prologue to collectivization, and the threat of deportation made many farmers join the kolkhozy. It was a great misfortune that farmers, as well as the intelligentsia, expected war to come quickly and did not think of the future. In 1948-49 the farmers sold everything they could: cows, horses, and young cattle. Many of the cattle were slaughtered, and the horses were largely sold cheaply and sent to the Soviet Union. When the farmers joined the kolkhozy, at times there were not even enough seed potatoes to furnish the farm stocks. Also, many farmers hid their equipment in the hope of having it for future personal use. As usual, organization of the kolkhozy was done quickly. In January 1950, talk about kolkhozy was not taken seriously, but by February and March of that year there were hardly any farmers outside the kolkhoz system. The chairmen and leaders of the kolkhozy were chosen from among pro-Soviet people, many of whom, in the past, had been unable to administer their own couple of hectares of land. These chairmen suddenly found themselves with considerable authority. It is said they often drank, and that some were seldom sober. The kolkhoz system cannot exist without discipline and good leadership.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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3. The year 1950 was much better than 1951. Although kolkhozy which had good chairmen in 1950 were paying five to eight kilograms of grain per workday, after the amalgamation into larger kolkhozy in 1951 they sometimes paid as little as one kilogram per workday. These units were too large for the limited efficiency of their chairmen. In 1951, when the kolkhozy were enlarged and amalgamated, difficulties began. None of the theoretical calculations which led the Communist Party to amalgamate the kolkhozy was fulfilled, and conditions became worse. In 1951, kolkhoz workers were generally paid 0.8 to 1.5 kilograms of grain per workday and only occasionally as much as two kilograms. The only kolkhozy paying cash for their workdays are those near towns, where they can sell their milk, fruit, and vegetables.
4. In 1951, most collective farm workers realized their hopeless position and began to change chairmen. Party members started to visit the kolkhozy, but this did not improve anything. The administration of 4,000 hectares of land as an agricultural unit is a very difficult task for an experienced and well-trained individual, and most of the chairmen had been drawn from simple countrymen who happened to have the desired political background. Still, there were instances of successful chairmen and of kolkhozy where progress was satisfactory, but these were few and in no way compared with the successes mentioned in the Soviet press.

The Present Situation in the Kolkhozy

5. When a member of a kolkhoz realizes that it does not pay him to work for one kilogram of grain a day, he tries to avoid this work by every possible means. According to regulations, a kolkhoz member must work at least 100 workdays a year. Usually, only one member of a family goes to work on the farm in order for the member to retain his right to keep his 60 ares of land. Other members of the family may work as fishermen, wood-cutters, tar collectors, and the younger people try to get places in the various schools. This, of course, increases the difficulties of the kolkhoz. Party officials are aware of what is going on, and they are not indifferent to it; but they usually say that in the end the people will learn how to work and everything will improve. This learning has so far come only the hard way; that is, in some kolkhozy, the people realized the hopelessness of their own situation and began to put in more work. In these kolkhozy, which thus began to get on their feet and paid five to eight kgs of grain, vegetables, and cattle food; the members ceased to sabotage, however unconsciously, the work and the situation improved still further.
6. In 1951, at the time of the amalgamation of the kolkhozy, the essential sections of the kolkhozy had been stocked by buying cows, young cattle, and various animals from the farmers. It was forbidden to slaughter cattle. To organize these sections, the kolkhozy received loans from the State, amounting to several thousand rubles. Often, some sections of the kolkhoz became very weak because of the lack of cattle food. The kolkhoz was forced to sell grain in order to repay the loans, thus reducing the pay to the kolkhoz workers further. For example, one kolkhoz decided to sow the meadowland, which requires fertilizer. To buy the fertilizer the kolkhoz took a loan in a bank; but, because of a bureaucratic tangle within the banks, the loan was not received in time to buy the fertilizer, and as a result the cattle lacked food during the winter. The young cattle starved or did not develop, and the cows became so weak that they could not stand, and there was no milk. In March, it was said that on this farm only one liter of milk a day was obtained from eight cows. Such a calamity will be felt for many years. The organization of the cattle sections in a number of amalgamated kolkhozy has not been successful.

Compulsory Deliveries

7. Compulsory deliveries are one of the great difficulties facing the collective farms. Each year, larger and larger harvests are planned in Moscow, and when

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the plan reaches the kolkhoz everyone is astounded by its absurdities. While harvests generally are dropping, the plans are made larger and the demand for compulsory deliveries greater, with the result that less remains for members of the kolkhoz.

8. Also, the State pays a ridiculously low price for compulsory deliveries. It pays only five rubles for one centner of grain and something like 1?-20 kopeks for one liter of milk.
9. After a kolkhoz has delivered all its quotas to the State, for which the income is very low, it then has to give grain to the MTS in payment for its work. It also has to form a fund for seed and to build up a supply of cattle food for pigs, cows, and poultry. After fulfilling these commitments, a kolkhoz often has no grain left to sell on the free market, where it can sell at whatever price it can get. . Often, there is not even enough grain left to pay members of the kolkhoz for their workdays.
10. The income from cattle and chickens is insignificant, because after milk, eggs, and meat have been delivered to the State, there is seldom anything left to sell on the free market. Only those few kolkhozy which have larger numbers of cows, are lucky to possess good stock, and also have good food supplies, are able to deliver a little milk to the free market. Some farms find it possible to rear pigs, and so have the income from them. Otherwise, the income from the free market mostly comes from the sale of vegetables and fruit. Kolkhozy near the sugar factories get income from their sugar beet. It is also possible to obtain an income from industrial crops, such as flax and koksaryz, but these crops cannot be grown everywhere.
11. Nevertheless, if a kolkhoz as an economic unit, taking into account the budgets from its various farms, lacks funds necessary to carry out its operations, it can receive credit from the banks. In this way, the building of new kolkhoz villages is being carried out. The tempo of building varies from place to place. In some districts, brick-works have been built for kolkhoz purposes, and farm buildings, such as sheds for cattle and pigs, are being built from bricks. But in most cases former farm buildings and houses are being pulled down and the bricks used again. It is thought that by 1960 little will be left of the old farmsteads.

Administration

12. It is true that the chairman of the kolkhoz decides its fate. If the chairman is good, the members of the kolkhoz can hope to be paid for their work and at least be able to live. But the conditions and regulations set by the State do not permit any chairman to make a really good living for the kolkhoz itself or for its members.
13. Under the present system, omitting the exceptional kolkhozy, a member of a collective farm cannot hope to do more than earn his food, some of which would come from his own piece of land anyway, and the problem of clothing remains difficult. Therefore, there is at times a great struggle over the election of a new chairman. It is usual for the Party to propose one candidate, but now that members of the kolkhoz realize the significance of the chairman's position, they do not readily give in to the Party.
14. In addition to the chairman of the kolkhoz, there are leaders of sections and brigadiers. The chiefs of sections, i.e., Cattle Section, etc., must all be energetic, devoted, and experienced men, who also possess initiative. The present-day countryman is not used to looking after general affairs, so that the chief of the cattle section often feeds his own pigs well and under-feeds the kolkhoz pigs. The supervising committee, which is made up of kolkhoz members, investigates everything and raises such questions at meetings. The chief of such a section would be thrown out and a new one elected,

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but frequently the same thing will happen all over again. It is only very firm and circumspect chairmen who can deal with weaknesses of this kind.

15. A few years ago, various attempts were made to prepare cadres for the kolkhozy, but so far the result is insignificant. If in each of 3,000 kolkhozy there must be a chairman, an agriculturalist, a technical expert for cattle, the chiefs of the sections, the leaders of the brigades, a horticulturalist, a bee-keeper, builders, etc., it would be necessary to prepare about 50,000 specialists. This would require about ten years, and then it would succeed only if the preparation of the cadres had been thorough. But the amalgamation of the kolkhozy without these specialists has no meaning. Although the Soviets are quick to organize various courses and schools and have produced detailed programs, examples, etc., one cannot foresee when they will be able to solve the problem of the cadres.

Wages and Life of the Kolkhozy

16. Usually it is important to a member of a kolkhoz to receive, from the kolkhoz, grain for his bread and food for his cattle. If a kolkhoz does fairly well, the member receives from four to five kilograms per workday or sometimes from seven to eight kilograms, grain for cattle food, and sometimes potatoes, etc. In this case, the members of the kolkhoz will try to put in more workdays, and more members of a family are likely to go to work. If one would assume that two persons from a family work for the kolkhoz and each earns 200 workdays a year, it would mean 400 workdays at four to five kilograms of grain per workday, or 1.6 to 2 tons a year. If they were paid eight kilograms, then the amount of grain for the family could reach three tons. But, in 1951, the majority of kolkhozy paid only two kilograms for a workday. On his own 60 ares of land a member of a kolkhoz can grow sufficient vegetables and potatoes for himself and for two or three pigs, and have some left to sell for cash. Most kolkhoz members sell butter and eggs after they have delivered the compulsory quota from their 60 ares. The quota is about four kilograms of meat, 150 to 250 liters of milk, and wool, eggs, etc. In fact, the town population is being fed on products which a kolkhoz member with difficulty must sell on the free market, because food products in the State shops, which are sold at official prices, are not available or are in short supply.
17. In the majority of cases, the kolkhoz members have only one cow, although the regulations allow them to keep two cows. When the kolkhozy were organizing their cattle sections, they forced their members to sell one cow to the kolkhoz. The local administration intended to take the last cow later and the kolkhoz stopped the food issue for this one cow. But the higher administration apparently did not agree to this, and one cow was left to each kolkhoz member. Although the State demands milk from this one cow, the kolkhoz does not allow sufficient food for its keep. At times, when people were forced to pull down their dwellings and to move to a kolkhoz village, they fed their cattle with the straw from the roofs of the buildings.
18. The question arises as to how the kolkhoz members get their bread when they are paid so little grain for their workdays. In such cases, kolkhoz members buy bread in the towns. In country towns, there are big lines at the bakers, and bread is not always available. It is generally known that members of the kolkhozy go to the towns to buy food. In winter, they sometimes take a sleigh and carry in things to sell in the town and bring back bread. Some kolkhoz members buy rye grain and bake bread themselves, adding sugar beet, potatoes, and vetch.
19. In general, the collective farms receive a sufficient quantity of artificial fertilizer at low prices, but they never give any to their members. Everything is done to make the position of the individual member of the kolkhoz difficult, in an endeavor to force him to work more on the farm. For example, the compulsory deliveries from the individually owned 60 ares of

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land is a form of pressure since there are no compulsory deliveries required from 15 ares of land, and it is hoped that the worker will freely give up the other 45 ares of land to the kolkhoz.

The Holding of Labor on the Kolkhozy

20. The general impression that travel in the Soviet Union is restricted is wrong. As long as a traveller has his personal documents in order and buys a railway ticket, he can travel anywhere. It is, however, different if the traveller is suspected of being a black-marketeer or is suspect politically. At times, Lithuanians who went to Riga, Leningrad, Moscow, or elsewhere, made money from such journeys; but, if one is caught speculating, the penalty is seven years for even the most trivial offense. The movement of kolkhoz members is not restricted either, but it is quite a different question if one wants to move a residence. It is easy to obtain an exit permit to leave Kaunas and to move to a country town, and it is also easy to transfer oneself from a country town to a village, but movement in the opposite direction is extremely difficult. As a rule the local administration will not give a kolkhoz member permission to leave the district. Those who go to schools get a temporary permit and, with the intervention of the school, receive permission to be registered temporarily in the town. At the end of the term, or when the course is completed, the pupil has to return to his home, though people usually find ways of overcoming these obstacles. When a young man arrives at a school in Kaunas, he will try by all possible means to remain there, so it becomes very difficult for the kolkhozy to build up cadres. This also explains why the towns are overcrowded. It is very difficult to get work in Kaunas, and there is a great lack of labor in the country.

Motor Tractor Stations: Their Aim and Relationship with the Kolkhozy

21. The aim of the MTS, from a technical, economic, and political point of view, is to be the leader of the kolkhozy. The director of the MTS is paid 900 rubles a month, and his Deputy for Political Affairs, 1,700 rubles a month. This shows the importance which is attached to the political leadership.
22. As a rule, kolkhozy must make a contract with the MTS at the beginning of each year. The contract is worked out by the higher authorities and is issued in printed form to the kolkhozy, which must fill in the relative figures and sign it. The essential element in this contract is the setting of the percentage of work to be done by the MTS in the kolkhozy. Usually, all kolkhozy try to avoid the technical help of the MTS and try to keep MTS help to a minimum. The MTS endeavor to do the opposite and raise their participation to a maximum. The decisive voice is with the MTS, and kolkhoz members have to accede.
23. In Kaunas Oblast, in the fall of 1951, the mechanical work of the MTS was supposed to amount to at least seventy-five percent of the total kolkhoz work. It sounds strange that kolkhozy should try to avoid mechanical aid, which was an important factor and the main argument in amalgamation. But there are many oddities and contradictions between logic and reality on the collective farms. One would assume that a tractor is a cheap and good mechanical aid to agriculture, but to the kolkhozy this instrument is very expensive and neither quick nor good. To plough one hectare costs about 108 kilograms of grain; and, once the tractor has started to work, using a deep and wide furrow, it is not possible to plough this field with an ordinary horse-plough. Therefore, all subsequent work on this area must be done by tractor, and the kolkhoz has to continue paying. When the MTS does everything, from ploughing to collection of the harvest by combine, it costs the kolkhoz 400 kilograms of grain per hectare. So, if a kolkhoz of 4,000 hectares, gives 1,000 to the MTS for cultivation, it would mean that in the autumn it would have to pay 400 tons of grain for the work, which at free

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market prices would make 800,000 rubles. This sum would be sufficient for the kolkhoz to purchase all necessary machines for the farms, and still have enough to pay the workers for their workdays. In this way the MTS are, so to speak, exhausting the kolkhozy, and in consequence all kolkhozy want to get rid of mechanization, and work the fields by horses. The government, however, prevents this by establishing the maximum number of horses a kolkhoz may own, and any above this number must be sold. The government cannot allow the tractors to be unused. They are employed in two or three shifts.

24. A tractor is not a quick means of work to the kolkhozy, because the kolkhoz is not in charge of the work to be done. It all depends on how the work is planned and organized by the MTS.
25. Also, the tractor has drawbacks, since, in the majority of cases, the arable land has not sufficient depth of soil. It is getting deeper every year; but that does not solve the problem, because the natural fertilizer from cattle is lacking, and the arable land is poorer and produces less. In 1950, when the kolkhozy were smaller and the land was worked by horses, there were better harvests. Although the MTS have sufficient equipment (sic), it is not really enough to solve completely the problem of working the land by technical means.
26. The charge is very small for mechanical work in connection with industrial agriculture. For example, to harvest flax costs only 33 rubles a hectare. But the MTS have only a small number of machines for this type of work.
27. The MTS exercise economic leadership of the kolkhozy. By making contracts with the collective farms, the MTS are dictating the means of working the land, i.e., sowing potatoes by nets, the system for sowing grain, etc. All the new methods which should be introduced into agriculture are being introduced by the MTS. The kolkhozy themselves would not be interested in these new methods, so they are being introduced by the MTS by pressure.
28. Despite the indifference which kolkhoz workers show towards the interests of the collective farms, the field work, with much interruption, is being done. Yet there is less labor in the country than there was under private ownership. Thus, one must recognize the great advantages which mechanical labor has brought to agriculture. The Soviets have many opportunities to supply the MTS gradually with various agricultural machines and to reduce the prices for which the MTS work for the kolkhozy. But it is a question of economic policy. If the kolkhozy were not exhausted by compulsory deliveries to the State and were supplied with mechanical equipment, the results could be much better.
29. At present, the equipment and economic facilities of the kolkhozy are wretched. They cannot afford to buy anything to expand a new branch of their work or to extend the old ones, such as orchards, bee-keeping, etc. At the end of the year, both the barns and the finances of the collective farms are so reduced that they have not sufficient resources to start the new year. It is understandable that the kolkhozy do not develop but can only struggle to survive. While the Soviets give the necessary financial aid to concerns with constant regular production, they treat those with seasonal production, such as kolkhozy, sovkhosy, sugar factories, etc., quite differently and allow them very little working capital for their own free use. This type of concern works on a seasonal loan, which it must repay at the end of the production season. Then it has to go until the next season without payment and without freedom to progress. This method of finance is considered convenient to the State, because with the same funds the State can finance several seasonal concerns. It looks tempting to the concerns, because the loan is given without any guarantee other than expected production. In fact, however, this method paralyzes the economy and prevents its free development. Many thought such financial methods were thorough and well thought out, but in practice they have

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negative results; the fault lies with bureaucracy and the restriction of free enterprise.

30. Briefly, the following reasons make it difficult to develop the kolkhozy and sometimes paralyze progress. Such a collective unit as a kolkhoz is hindered by bureaucracy. It needs to be in a free economic system within the State. Such a collective unit must be able to sell its products at market prices. At present, the compulsory deliveries to the State and the high charges of the MTS make the kolkhozy financially and economically powerless. The lack of cadres and the size of the kolkhozy are decisive factors. The kolkhozy of 400 to 800 hectares were administratively much more efficient, and more economical to run. Kolkhozy of 2,000 to 4,000 hectares would probably be more useful from the point of view of cultural life, i.e., one school, one shop, and one creche. But kolkhozy of this size require skilled and well-prepared cadres. These cadres are lacking at present; and, therefore, there was nothing on which to base the amalgamation of the kolkhozy. The mechanical means of production are not owned by the kolkhozy, and there is a general shortage of agricultural machinery.
31. The psychology of the kolkhozniki also plays a large role. The Communists fail to find any enthusiasm in the masses, least of all in the kolkhozniki. They are trying to introduce this enthusiasm by artificial means. At present, the world of the kolkhoznik is very restricted and his requirements are limited to food and clothing. He does not worry about tarring his cart wheels, building a house, buying land, teaching his children, or raising a dowry for his daughter. He has nothing to fight for, and if he feeds his horses all his worries end in the stable. Of course, the standard of living which can be reached in the Soviet Union is still far above that of the kolkhoznik, so there is plenty of room for advancement. However, the kolkhoznik of a good or bad kolkhoz treats his work lightly and without care. He is usually late at work, which should begin at 8 o'clock in the morning, and he does not worry if it is raining or fine. This indifference springs from the limited aims of his life. It would appear that greed is one of the most important stimuli in economic life, and this stimulus is lacking in kolkhoz life. For example, a kolkhoz woman in Siauliai was brought before the court because she had put piglets into an iron barrel, where of course they froze to death. When the judge asked her whether, if these piglets had belonged to her, she would have done the same thing, she said, "No". She said she did not know why she did so with the piglets which belonged to the kolkhoz. She received a sentence of seven years.

The Future of the Kolkhozy

32. The measures concerning the kolkhozy introduced in 1953 may be a cure for some of the defects in the system, and they may also give a certain moral impulse to the kolkhoz people. As a result, the working day wage may reach four to five kilograms of grain, which may spare the kolkhoznik the necessity of making up shortages in his compulsory deliveries from his own piece of land. If he happens to have two cows, the kolkhoz member will solve his own food problem, and, as in pre-kolkhoz days, his food situation may surpass that of the townsman.
33. The future of the Lithuanian kolkhozy will entirely depend on the perspicacity of the Soviet Government in respect to the kolkhoz system in general and its application in Lithuania. Whatever it is to be, until new kolkhoz villages are built, new stock is reared, and the preparation of cadres is completed, the kolkhozy at the best will only be able to survive for a number of years to come. Although time will work in favor of the system, it is not believed that the kolkhozy will reach such a standard as would justify the introduction of the system into Lithuania under the Soviets. Nobody in Lithuania believes that the Soviets will ever offer terms which will allow the kolkhozy to develop freely. The defects of the kolkhozy lie in the government system and not in the kolkhozy themselves.

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